

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-40 (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) A frame assembly for a loader machine, said loader machine having an undercarriage including a first and a second crossmember, said frame assembly comprising:

a main frame assembly having a base portion;

a first recessed channel defined on said base portion and extending across the width of said base portion, wherein said first recessed channel is positioned to seat directly on said first crossmember of said undercarriage; and

a second recessed channel defined on said base portion and extending across the width of said base portion, wherein said second recessed channel is positioned to seat directly on said second crossmember of said undercarriage.

Please add new Claims 42-52 as follows:

42. (New) The frame assembly of claim 41 wherein said first and second recessed channels are positioned between a front and a rear section of said main frame assembly.

43. (New) The frame assembly of claim 41, wherein said main frame assembly includes:

an upper frame assembly having a pair of space tower assemblies, a pair of side members having front and rear portions with each of said side members being connected to a respective one of the pair of tower assemblies and extending longitudinally therefrom, and a crossmember assembly extending between the pair of tower assemblies for connection therewith; and

a lower frame assembly having a pair of spaced vertically oriented side rails and a front wall extending continuously between said side rails for connection therewith, said upper frame assembly is mounted to said lower frame assembly at a connection between said side members of said upper frame assembly and said respective side rails of said lower frame assembly.

44. (New) The frame assembly of claim 41, wherein said undercarriage is a tracked undercarriage having a first and a second ground engaging member.

45. (New) The frame assembly of claim 41, wherein said first and second recessed channels define a strengthened region of said main frame assembly and are operable to provide torsional stiffness to said loader machine.

46. (New) The frame assembly of claim 43, wherein said lower frame assembly is formed of medium strength steel.

47. (New) The frame assembly of claim 43, wherein said lower frame assembly further includes said base portion and said first and second recessed channels.

48. (New) The frame assembly of claim 43, wherein said crossmember assembly is disposed between said front and rear end portions of said upper frame assembly.

49. (New) The frame assembly of claim 43, wherein said side members of said upper frame assembly extend along said side rails of said lower frame assembly a predetermined distance and terminate rearward of said front wall.

50. (New) A method of making a loader machine comprising the steps of:
providing an undercarriage having a first and a second crossmember;
providing a frame assembly having a base portion, front and rear sections, and a first and a second recessed channel defined on said base portion and extending across the width of said base portion; and
mounting said frame assembly to said undercarriage, wherein said first recessed channel is seated on said first crossmember and said second recessed channel is seated on said second crossmember.

51. (New) The frame assembly of claim 50, wherein said undercarriage is a tracked undercarriage having a first and a second ground engaging member connected by at least one of said first and second crossmembers.

52. (New) The frame assembly of claim 51, wherein said first and second ground engaging members are track assemblies.